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A HISTORICAL SKETCH
OF THE
WIDOWS' HOUSE AT BETHLEHEM, PA.,
1768-1892.

BY JOHN W. JORDAN.

"It shall be to Me a name of joy, a praise and an honor, before all the nations of the earth, which shall hear all the good that I do unto them."—
Jer. 33, 9.—(Text of the Dedication Address, October 12, 1768.)

PREFATORY NOTE.

Three plates of illustrations—the first devoted to the original building, and the second and the third, respectively, to the exterior and the interior of the annex—have been contributed by friends, to be used in this pamphlet and also in the Memorial Volume which the Moravian Church at Bethlehem will publish in commemoration of the Third Jubilee of its establishment on June 25, 1742.

A HISTORICAL SKETCH OF THE WIDOWS' HOUSE AT BETHLEHEM, PA.

FROM the establishment of the Moravian Church in the Province of Pennsylvania, our forefathers, appreciating that helplessness and old age should be the objects of a peculiar tenderness and sympathy, introduced the plan adopted by the Mother Church, by which there could be but little poverty and no destitution among those who had devoted their best years or lives to her service. The same spirit, therefore, which led to the erection of the other "Choir Houses" in Bethlehem, led to the building of the Widows' House, which for nearly a century and a quarter has afforded its inmates the comforts of a retired home.

Nazareth was the seat of the first Widows' Œconomy of the Moravian Church in America, and the humble building which sheltered our pilgrim fathers on the "Barony," became the residence of those "old mothers of the Church" who had been bereft of husband and home. You may see it to-day, embowered among the trees which separate it from the "stone house Ephrata." Prior to the organization of their Œconomy, the widows of the Church were scattered among the congregations, engaged in various capacities. Those at Bethlehem resided in the house for "Married People," (on the site of the present Church), and in the "Clergyhouse," while in the "Nursery" and in the school at Nazareth a number were employed.

In the Spring of 1755, the Choir was formed, and Nazareth designated as its seat. On May 1, wagons were sent down to Bethlehem from Gnadenthal and Christian's Spring to transfer the eleven widows with their effects to Nazareth. At 10 o'clock on the morning of May 2, they reached their destination, escorted by Sister Catharine Huber, of Nazareth, and were at once conducted by Bro. Heckewelder (the father of the well-known missionary among the Indians) to their house, where Bro. Lembke cordially welcomed them by singing a hymn. With the widows of Nazareth, at noon, they attended a service in the Chapel of the "Whitefield House," in which the hymn: "Da Jesus an dem Kreuze stund," was sung with instrumental accompaniment, "The widows," writes the chronicler of Nazareth, "were very happy, and thankful for their house, which they had not expected would be so pleasant."¹

The following day (Saturday, May 3), they witnessed the laying of the corner-stone of Nazareth Hall—from the variety of nationalities present, one of the most notable Moravian gatherings in America. Scarcely had they become settled in their new home, before one of their number was removed by death. On June 5, the aged Sister Elizabeth Banister, mother of Jasper Payne, was called to her eternal home. She was born in England in 1669, and accompanied her son to Pennsylvania, with the "Second Sea Congregation."

Before the close of the year, Nazareth became crowded with the inhabitants of the remoter settlements of Old Northampton, who fled thither for safety from the disaffected Indians in the service of France, who were murdering and devastating the country along the line of the

¹ "At last the Widows have the satisfaction of being able to live by themselves, and have their own Choir arrangements, which has hitherto been quite impossible."—*Bethlehem Diary, May 1755.*

Blue Mountains. To afford accommodations for these panic-stricken refugees, on December 1, the Widows' Choir, which had been increased by the arrival some weeks before of Rosina Endter, widow of George Endter, who died at the mission in Berbice, and Ann Elizabeth Leinbach and Catharine Weber, from Oley, gave up their house and were transferred to Gnadenthal, where they remained until the ensuing Summer.

These are the names of those who composed the first "Widows' Economy:"

Catharine Huber, Deaconess ;	
Gertrude Bonn,	Maria Hauser,
Catharine Brownfield,	Elizabeth Hertzner,
Rosina Endter,	Judith Shurr,
Ann M. Lehnert,	Regina Hantsch,
Elizabeth Ronner,	Rosina Muenster,
Catharine Weber,	Ann E. Leinbach,
Sarah Leighton,	Rosina Schuts,
Magdalena E. Reiss,	Ann Mary Demuth.

With the exception of adverting to the dedication of the Chapel in Nazareth Hall, November 13, 1756, on which festival occasion the widows were present and for the first time wore the white ribbon in their caps as the insignia of their Choir, (which regulation was continued to the Synod of 1818), we pass on in our history to the Summer of 1766, when we find that the Choir, "were much rejoiced at the action of the Synod held in Bethlehem, in resolving to build a Widows' House in Bethlehem, the commencement of which would probably be made during the following Spring."

By the year 1760, the house at Nazareth becoming too small for the Choir, and the aged members finding the distance to the chapel in Nazareth Hall (since 1756 the sanctuary of the congregation), too great in inclement

weather to attend the services, the matter was brought up in a Congregation Council at Bethlehem, when it was proposed to erect a building adjoining the Sisters' House for their accommodation. Temporary relief, however, was afforded by transferring several widows from the Whitefield House to the Burnside plantation, near Bethlehem.²

The Synod which convened at Bethlehem, May 3 to June 4, 1766, recommended the building of a Widows' House in Bethlehem, and that collections be made in all the congregations of the Province, and donations solicited in Europe. Two weeks thereafter, a lengthy communication, signed on behalf of the Choir by Sister Werwing, the Deaconess, praying for united action on the part of all the congregations, was read to the communicant members at Bethlehem. By invitation of the Board of Wardens, on December 1, Sisters Werwing and Huber came down from Nazareth to select a site. The next day they selected the lot known as the "Congregation Garden," opposite to the Girls' School in the Sisters' House, in dimensions 121 feet 6 inches front, by 200 feet in depth, whereupon the Wardens passed a resolution to erect a building the following Spring, and appointed Abraham Boemper superintendent and treasurer of the building fund. On January 8, 1767, the plan of the building, to be 78x44 feet, was approved, and on April 27, the mason-work was ready for the laying of the corner-stone. The day prior to the ceremony Bro. Lembke and wife, with Bro. Peter, escorted a number of the widows from Nazareth, and early the next morning the remainder of the Choir left in wagons for Bethlehem.

Monday, April 27, 1767, proved to be a bright Spring day. When the Widows' Choir and the congregation

² In 1763, there were three widows in Bethlehem who were unable to join the Choir at Nazareth for want of room.

assembled in the chapel, Bro. Nathanael Seidel gave out as the first hymn :

“Unser Gottes Lämmelein
Ist in unsrer Mitte,
Er mag noch so ungeseh'n
Unter uns 'rum geh'n," u.s.w.

He then spoke with “unction” on the text of the day : “In Salem also is His tabernacle and His dwelling place in Zion,” applying it to the laying of the corner-stone of the Widows’ House, and asked the congregation to accompany the act with their prayers and blessings. Thereupon the document, in English and German, which was to be placed in the leaden box, was read. An English translation, to be found in the Bethlehem Archives, is as follows :

“After the birth of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ ; during the mild reign of George III, King of Great Britain, our most gracious Sovereign ; at the time of the governorship of the Honorable John Penn, Governor of the Province of Pennsylvania ; also in the third year after the General Synod of the whole Brethren’s Unity which convened at Marienborn, the first Synod after the departure on the 9th of May, 1760, of the memorable Servant of the Lord ; by Virtue of the gracious consent of an Act of Parliament to the Evangelical Brethren’s Unity ; here in Bethlehem, in the presence and with the blessing of our beloved and reverend brethren Nathanael Seidel, the present Œconomus of the Brethren’s congregations in North America, and Co-episcopus David Nitschmann, the elder, Bishop Math. Hehl, Episcopus Provincialis, John Ettwein, assistants at the present Œconomat, and Francis Christian Lembke, Ordinarius of the congregation at Nazareth, as well as with the sincere blessing of the whole congregation (now numbering 540 souls) and all the persons engaged in the service of the same N. N. on the 27th of April, when the Daily Word from the Brethren’s Text Book was the following : ‘In Salem also is His tabernacle and His dwelling place in Zion ;’ here in Bethlehem, in the Name of the Holy Trinity was laid this corner-stone to this Widows’ House, the building of which had been decided upon in the year 1766. This place had been selected by the wise counsels of the Directors and Visitatores of that time and the authorized Deputy of the Directors, our beloved and honored brother David Nitschmann,

and the Synod then assembled here. In the presence of all the Widows, twenty-eight in number, N. N. among whom were the Widows' Labouresses, the Sisters Wilhelmine Werwing and Catharine Huber, and with the good wishes of the Widows' Labouress in New York, Eliza Ronner, the building was consecrated and dedicated to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, that He may bless, protect and care for all who will dwell therein ; to the Son, slain for us, the Bridegroom of souls, that He may be the support of all the Widows and fill their hearts with a blessed hope and daily communion with Him and that He may fill the whole house with His presence ; to the Holy Spirit, that He may preserve it as His holy temple to the end of days."

This was followed by the hymn :

" Ach auserwählter Heiland,
Du willst ja dass wir bleiben,
Drum segne jed' Revier wo wir eingezogen," u.s.w.,

whereupon all repaired to the site of the building, which they surrounded, while chorals were performed by the trombonists from the belfry on the north side of the street. An original hymn, composed for the occasion was next sung.

While the words, "In Thy Name we now lay the first stone," were being sung, Sisters Werwing and Huber approached the corner-stone, and during the singing of: "In the Name of the Father, and of the Son and the Holy Ghost," by the whole congregation, the corner-stone was laid and the leaden box with the documents was placed in it by Sister Werwing. As both sisters retired, the congregation again sang. Bro. Seidel then advanced to the stone and kneeling upon it offered up a prayer, imploring the protection of the Holy Trinity upon the Widows' Choir and their building. During the singing of the hymns :

" Dies Haus soll werden," u.s.w.,
"Mache dieses Hüttlein zum Exempel," u.s.w.,

two masons walled in the corner-stone. It was a solemn and impressive act, and the peace of God rested upon it from beginning to the end. The Widows' Choir re-

turned to the chapel, where Bro. Seidel delivered a discourse to them. After all the members of the Choir with their officers had dined together, those from Nazareth departed with Bro. Lembke.

Andrew Schober and Martin Schenk were the master-masons, and Tobias Hirte, the master carpenter, employed in the erection of the Widows' House; all experienced mechanics whose ability had been tested in other settlements of the Church. By September 21 the rafters were raised and the roof covered with cedar shingles, purchased in Philadelphia; but it was not before the Autumn of 1768 that the building was in a condition to be dedicated or receive any inmates. Its final completion dates from October 11, 1768. The bell which hungs at the foot of the stairs on the first floor was cast by Tommerup, in 1770, in his foundry in the Brethren's House.

The entire cost of the Widows' House we have failed to ascertain definitely, but we have been able to compile a list of contributions of money, labor and materials, aggregating £1000, towards its erection, made between June of 1766 and June of 1769. It may here also be stated, that the first contribution for the erection of a Widows' House, was made by the widow of James Burnside, in 1758, when she allotted £50 for the purpose, out of the purchase money for the plantation she disposed of to the Church.

List of Contributions, Labor and Materials, for the erection of the Widows' House at Bethlehem, 1766-1769.

Robert Hussey, ...	£ 2	15	.
Joachim Birnbaum, ...	1	.	.
Richard Poppelwell, ...	1	.	.
A. H. Francke, ...	3	15	.
Thomas Fischer, ...	1	10	.
J. Matthew Otto, ...	2	10	.
J. G. Youngman, ...	7	6	.
Ludwig Huebner, ...	15	.	.

J. G. Nixdorf, ...	1	1	6
Jasper Payne, ...		15	
Abraham Andres, ...	5		
Daniel Kliet, ...	1		
Jacob Wiesinger, ...	2		
George Klein, ...	2	2	
George Geitner, ...	1		
Valentine Fuehrer, ...		10	
Marx Kiefer, ...		5	
Ephraim Culver, ...		7	6
Timothy Horsfield, ...	5		
J. F. Oberlin, ...	1	10	
Anton Schmidt, ...		10	
Frederick Boeckel, ...	1	10	
George Huber, ...	1		
Ludwig Stotz, ...	2		
John Bechtel, ...	4		
Peter Worbis, ...	2	10	
Matthew Weiss, ...	3		
Christian Richter, ...	1		
Christian Werner, ...		16	
Daniel Kunckler, ...		7	6
Henry Krause, ...	1		
Godfrey Römelt, ...	1		
Henry Miller, ...	1		
Nicholas Garrison, ...	5		
Gottlieb Lange, ...	1	10	
C. J. Sangerhausen, ...		5	6
— Mayer, (widow), ...	16	8	4
— Balschen, (widow), ...		2	
Christian Jacobsen, ...	3		
John Green, ...		5	
Valentine Haidt, ...	5		
Christian Eggert, ...	1		
J. Frederick Oerter, ...	1	10	
— Claus, (widow), ...		7	6
Thomas Schaaf, ...		10	
Andrew Broksch, ...	1		
Christian Stierner, ...	1		
Frederick von Marschall, ...	5	8	
Paul Münster, a ground rent, ...	1	7	
J. P. Thrane, ...	1		
Abraham Boemper, ...	25		
Ferdinand Detmers, ...	3		
John Stoll, ...	1		
An unknown Friend		7	6
Sister Werbegen, ...	1		

III

Catharine Brownfield, (widow), ...	2	.	.
Johanna Dorothy Miller, ...	.	5	.
An unknown Friend	1	.	.
John M. Spohn, ...	3	.	.
John Ettwein, ...	1	10	.
John Brandmiller, ...	5	.	.
Henry Schoen, ...	3	.	.
F. C. Diemer, ...	1	10	.
Andrew Albright, ...	.	7	6
Just. Jansen, ...	.	3	9
William Edmonds, ...	3	.	.
Melchior Schmidt, ...	.	4	.
Adam von Erd, ...	.	15	.
Timothy Horsfield, jr., ...	.	15	.
Regina Tanneberger, (widow), ...	.	2	.
Jacob Rubel, Schoeneck, ...	.	5	.
— Walthers, ...	1	.	.
Collected in New York, ...	37	13	4
“ Single Brethren, Bethlehem, ...	51	17	4
“ Diacony, Bethlehem, ...	4	.	.
“ Sisters' House, Bethlehem, ...	25	15	5
“ Oley, ...	.	6	.
“ Manocacy, ...	3	17	6
“ Lancaster, ...	51	2	6
“ Donegal, ...	3	15	6
“ Philadelphia, ...	35	7	4
“ Lynn, ...	2	16	.
“ Heidelberg, ...	3	17	.
“ Paulin's Kill, ...	5	.	.
“ Emmaus, ...	6	16	7
“ Yorktown, ...	9	12	6
“ Hebron, ...	2	5	.
“ Bethabara, ...	9	10	3
“ Lititz, ...	11	14	6
“ “ Sisters' House, ...	1	11	.
“ “ Diacony, ...	3	12	.
“ “ Single Brethren, ...	5	.	.
“ Gnadenthal, ...	.	17	4
“ Bethel, ...	.	15	.
“ Europe, ...	82	16	2
“ Nazareth, ...	34	11	9
“ Nazareth, the Rose, and Friedensthal, ...	5	12	1
“ Nazareth Hall, ...	3	.	.
Collected through John Arbo, ...	19	17	4
“ “ Jacob von der Merck, ...	9	7	6
“ “ John Ettwein, ...	15	.	.
“ “ Ferd. Detmers, ...	26	.	.
“ “ Nathanael Seidel, ...	74	.	.

Legacy of Bro. Braun, Hebron, ...	20	.	.
“ Widow Graff, Lancaster, ...	50	.	.
Donation of Mary Burnside, ...	50	.	.
Loans of Barbara Braun, ...	7	.	.
“ Conrad Gerhard, ...	20	.	.
“ Sarah Ysselstein, ...	36	.	.
“ Verona Miller, ...	6	.	.
“ Christian Segner, ...	10	.	.
“ Magdalena Graeff, ...	30	.	.
Bethlehem Diacony, gutterwood and shingles, . . .	1	18	3
Christian's Spring Brethren, hauling 100 loads, . . .	.	5	6
Gnadenhal Brethren, hauling 83 loads, ...	.	3	12
Nazareth Brethren, hauling 84 loads, ...	1	15	.
Barbara Fenstermacher, for the making of one room	50	.	.
Jacob Loesch, in labor, ...	3	.	.
Ludwig Huebener, for 10 loads stone, ...	.	19	2
“ “ for gutterwood, ...	.	4	6
“ “ for lime, ...	.	5	.
J. G. Youngman, for lime, ...	.	2	3
The Tannery, for lime, ...	.	2	3
Carl Schultz, for lime, ...	.	.	6
Caspar Fischer, for lime, ...	.	5	.
David Nitschmann, labor amounting to	5	.	.
Andrew ye Moor, labor two or three weeks, ...	.	.	.
Michael Haberland, will work as much as possible. .	.	.	.
John Okely, two window frames, ...	.	7	6
Caspar Fischer, labor, ...	.	8	.
Anton Schmidt, labor, ...	.	18	.
Andrew Schober, labor, ...	.	7	.
Andrew Schober presents the corner-stone, ...	.	18	.
Francis Steup, labor, ...	.	.	.

Before describing the ceremonies attending the dedication of the Widows' House, let us turn to the division of the Choir at Nazareth. At half-past 1 o'clock on October 8, 1768, the congregation assembled to celebrate a Communion Love-feast. "In the first place a solemn and affecting farewell service was held with the Widows, who to-day communed with the congregation for the last time. The Lord was thanked for the privilege of having the Choir with them almost fourteen years, to enjoy their love and kind services in many respects. At the same time, thanks were returned to the congregation for the love, faithfulness and assistance they had extended to the

Choir. Hymns of blessing were then sung, after which the Love-feast was held."

A special service with the widows was held October 11, in their prayer-hall, when Bro. Lembke made a short address, in which he referred to the most important occurrences during their sojourn at Nazareth, and then commended them to the Lord. At the close Bro. Lembke sung:

"So geht nun in des Herren Freud',
Und in der lieben Engel Geleit;
Die Gottes Familie sei euch nah!"

At 7 o'clock on the morning of October 12, the Widows, (after having on the preceding day bid farewell to the members of the congregation), set out for Bethlehem, accompanied by Bro. Lembke and wife, the Brethren Peter, Bader and Dencke, where they arrived at 10 o'clock. (The widow Brown, with her daughter, from Hebron, had also arrived.) When the Choir reached the Sun Inn, they were welcomed by several of the brethren in the name of the congregation, and escorted to the "Clergyhouse," while the hymn:

"Guten Tag und Friede und Gesundheit," u.s.w.,

was sung from the "Altan" of the Brethren's House. The whole Choir, twenty-eight in number, dined with the clergy of Bethlehem and Nazareth in the "Clergyhouse," namely: Maria Wilhelmina Werwing³, Catharine Huber⁴,

³ Maria Wilhelmina Werwing, Deaconess, born September 9, 1721, at Baden-Durlach. Her father was Christian, Baron von Raschau, and her mother, Henrietta Louisa, Baroness von Closen. She met Zinzendorf in 1733, at her grandmother's in Würtemberg, and in 1737 went to Herrnhut, where she united with the Church. In 1743, she married Peter Werwing, pastor at Gnadenfrey, and subsequently labored with him in Sweden. Returning to Herrnhut, her husband died there in 1755. Appointed Deaconess of the Widows' Choir in the American Province, she came over in the *Hope*, in October of 1763. She died January 3, 1795.

⁴ Catharine Huber, m. n. Butmansky, whose parents were Papists, was from Siedendorf, Moravia. She came to Herrnhut in 1725, and participated

Julia Benedicta von Gammern⁵, Ann Maria Schropp⁶,

in the Lord's Supper of August 13, 1727. Married first Frederic Riedel, who accompanied Bishop Spangenberg to Georgia in 1735. The year following she sailed for Savannah to join her husband, and on her arrival found he had died five months before. She used to relate that she found Spangenberg acting as cook for the colony, until relieved by herself, when he gave her all directions in detail how much rice and meat to use for a meal; that General Oglethorpe and others had often met him in the kitchen thus engaged. Here she married her second husband, Peter Rose, and with him labored among the Creek Indians, and subsequently in Germantown, where he died in March of 1740. Her third husband was John Michael Huber, who was lost at sea, on the passage to St. Thomas, in October of 1747. While the Widows' Choir was at Nazareth, she was for some time "Hausmutter" in the Nursery: in fine this remarkably energetic woman during her long and eventful life filled almost every position to which a sister could be appointed. She died at Bethlehem in February of 1798, in her 96th year, "the oldest Moravian in America and the one longest in the service." A portrait of her, painted by Haidt, is preserved in the Bethlehem Archives.

⁵ Juliana Benedicta von Gammern, m. n. Mauersberg, was born March 21, 1717, in Silesia. In 1751 she married Abraham von Gammern, of Neusalz, and with him came to America on the *Hope*, in October of 1761. From Bethlehem, in 1762, they proceeded to Wachovia, where he died in November of 1765, at Bethabara. Henry Laurens, of South Carolina, writing to the Rev. John Ettwein, at Bethabara, under date of November 10, 1763, says of him: "I have received a good deal of satisfaction from this short acquaintance with Mr. Von Gammern, and I wish he had enabled me to be more serviceable to him in his affairs; but I have told him frankly, that he may at all times lay his commands upon me, and I shall by some means or other strive to answer his expectations. He is very shrewd and understanding in business of merchandize, and I am persuaded will always give a good account of his stewardship." After the death of her husband, she returned to Bethlehem and was appointed Deaconess of the Widows' Choir. She died September 12, 1807.

⁶ Ann Maria Schropp, m. n. Thommen or Tomet, was born April 13, 1719, at Basel, Switzerland. She married, first, Matthew Schropp, born March 21, 1722, in Bavaria, and with him came to Pennsylvania, with the "Second Sea Congregation," and settled at Nazareth, where he became Steward of the congregation. He was ordained a Deacon in 1748, and died at Bethabara, N. C., September 11, 1767. She left the Widows' House, August 23, 1778, to marry the Rev. John Wolfgang Michler, who was one of the original members of the "Widows' Society." He deceased October 5, 1785, at Hebron, Pa., and she, April 3, 1786, at Nazareth.

⁷ Barbara Brown, m. n. Knecht, afterwards Wiesinger, was born March 6, 1735, in the Palatinate. She accompanied her uncle to St. Kitts, W. I., where she married her second husband, Brown, an Englishman. Here she

Barbara Brown⁷, Elizabeth Ronner⁸, Catharine Brownfield⁹, Verona Miller¹⁰, Mercy Salmons¹¹, Mariana

was awakened by a Methodist clergyman. She accompanied her husband to Philadelphia, and thence to Lititz and Hebron, where he died. At the latter place she united with the Moravians. She entered the Widows' House at Nazareth, and in 1768, that at Bethlehem. In 1772, she married her third husband, J. J. Wiesinger, who died in 1790. From this date, she resided for ten years with a married daughter at Hope, N. J. She returned to the Widows' House in April of 1800, and died November 28, 1804. Her husband was one of the original members of the "Widows' Society." She was twice an inmate of the Widows' House—as the widow Brown and as the widow Wiesinger.

⁸ Elizabeth Ronner, m. n. Fissler, born 1717 in Switzerland. She married in 1743, the Rev. John Reinhard Ronner, who was ordained a Deacon at Philadelphia, the same year, by Bishop Böhler. They labored in Philadelphia, Tulpehocken, Muddy Creek, the Minisinks and Warwick, and between 1750 and 1755 in the mission on St. Thomas. He died at Bethlehem in July of 1756. She went in 1760, to New York as Deaconess to the Widows' Choir. Removed to the Widows' House in 1770, and died there in February of 1771.

⁹ Catharine Brownfield, m. n. Kearney, born in New York in 1718. She was one of the first converts made by Zinzendorf in Philadelphia, and was sent to Bethlehem in 1745. In 1746, she joined the Single Sisters' Choir at Nazareth, and the year following was married to John Brownfield, for some time the Secretary of General Oglethorpe, in Georgia, and since 1745, the bookkeeper of the Economy at Bethlehem. He died in April of 1752, and she in April of 1798.

¹⁰ Verona Miller, m. n. Fry, born May 12, 1723, in Frederick township, now Montgomery County, Penna. During Zinzendorf's tour through the Province, she heard him preach in her father's house and at Henry Antes', and accompanied the Count and his suite to Germany in 1743. In 1744, she married Joseph Miller, at Herrnhaag, where they served in the congregation, and subsequently at Lindheim, near Frankfort-on-the-Main, and at other places. They came to America on the *Irene*, in 1749, and were stationed at Friedensthal and Gnadensthal. Her husband died at the latter place in March of 1761, and is known to those well read in the history of the "Barony of Nazareth," as a practitioner of minor surgery and the art of phlebotomy. She died at Bethlehem, from cancer of the face, August 10, 1780. Of her Cammerhoff has written: "Sie ist aus Oley zur Gemeinde gekommen, und ist sonst *robust* und *zur äusserlicher Arbeit* recht wohl zu gebrauchen."

¹¹ Mercy Salmons, m. n. Holy, born January 24, 1731, at Stratford, Connecticut. But little is known of the early years of her life, except that she married Salmons, who deserted her and her two children, and went to South Carolina, where he died. She lived near the Moravian congregation

Hoeth¹², Sarah Leighton¹³, Rosina Fritsche¹⁴, Rosina Muenster¹⁵, Mary Hauser¹⁶, Rosina Tanneberger¹⁷,

at Sichem, New York, with which she subsequently united, and in 1763, removed to Bethlehem. Later she joined the Widows' Choir at Nazareth. At Bethlehem she earned her living by tailoring, and died November 10, 1803

¹² Mariana Hoeth, daughter of Frederick and Joanetta Hoeth, was born in May of 1737, near Zweibrücken. In 1748, she accompanied her parents to Philadelphia, where they united with the Moravian congregation. In 1752, her father purchased a tract of land in the present Monroe County, and removed his family thither. In December of 1755, part of the family were murdered by Indians, and Mariana was taken a captive to Tioga. Here she was forced to marry an Indian, by whom she had one son, who died in his fifth year. In 1762 she escaped with her son and reached Bethlehem, and united with the Widows' Choir at Nazareth. She died at Bethlehem in April of 1772.

¹³ Sarah Leighton, m. n. Clifford, was born May 19, 1704, near Canterbury, England. In 1732, she married John Leighton, born in Scotland, and took charge of the school for children at Lamb's Inn. She came to America with the "Second Sea Congregation," in 1743, and served the congregations in Germantown, Philadelphia, Maryland, the Oblong and West Jersey. On account of her husband's poor health they moved to Bethlehem, where he died in August of 1756. She died April 11, 1785.

¹⁴ Rosina Fritsche, m. n. Haus, married Paul Fritsche, of Moravia, in 1749, and came to Bethlehem with the "John Nitschmann colony." He died at Nazareth in November of 1765, after his removal from Friedensthal.

¹⁵ Rosina Muenster, m. n. Nitschmann, was born November 24, 1706; married John Muenster in October of 1735, and came to America with the "Second Sea Congregation" in 1743. They labored in the Macungy School and at Friedensthal, where he died in May of 1754. She was a very busy worker and assisted on the Bethlehem farm till she was 80 years old. She died January 22, 1791.

¹⁶ Mary Hauser, m. n. Schweitzer, was born May 15, 1692, in Switzerland. She married Adam Stohler, who died while they were preparing to emigrate to America. She settled in Germantown, where she married her second husband, Felix Hauser, who died fifteen months thereafter. In 1742, she attended the preaching of Count Zinzendorf, and removed to Bethlehem the same year. For a time she assisted in the school in Frederick Township. She died in April of 1774, the oldest resident of the Widows' House.

¹⁷ Rosina Tanneberger, m. n. Leupold, was born September 7, 1702, in Bohemia, and for reading evangelical books was persecuted by the Papists, and fled to Herrnhut. She married first, in 1728, Gotthard Demuth, who accompanied Spangenberg to Georgia, in 1735. She followed her husband and remained there two years and four months. He died at Germantown in December of 1744. In 1745 she married her second husband, David

Geritje Bonn¹⁸, Christina Segner¹⁹, Maria Rosina Moeller²⁰,
Rosina Kremser²¹, Jane Prosky²², Barbara Elizabeth
Hertzer²³, Magdalena Elizabeth Reiss²⁴, Elizabeth Keller²⁵,

Tanneberger, Sr., from Moravia, who died at Bethlehem in July of 1760. For upwards of fifteen years she served as midwife, and died in February of 1774.

¹⁸ Geritje Bonn, born in 1692, in Holland, emigrated to America in 1696, and was married in 1710 to Peter Bonn, of Skippach, who died in Bethlehem in 1745. She died February 18, 1779. She was the mother of "Pappy" Bonn, of happy memory.

¹⁹ Christina Segner, daughter of William and Verona (Levering) Frey, born March 5, 1727, in Frederick township, Penna. She visited Bethlehem in 1747, where she was baptized. She married John Henry Segner in 1748, and served three years in the mission on St. Thomas, W. I. In 1753 they were stationed at Gnadenthal, where her husband died November 6, 1763. She died February 6, 1816, aged nearly 89 years.

²⁰ Maria Rosina Moeller, m. n. Dietrich, was born October 19, 1722, at Torpisch, Silesia. She united with the congregation at Herrnhut in 1736. In 1743 she married John Henry Moeller, and came to Pennsylvania with the "Second Sea Congregation," and was one of the original members of the Nazareth congregation. He conducted the Antes' mill for the benefit of the school at Frederick, and labored at Heidelberg, Lynn and Oley. In 1759, he was appointed Vorsteher of the Girls' School at Bethlehem. He died in 1760, and she August 5, 1808.

²¹ Rosina Kremser, m. n. Obersdorf, was born June 3, 1719, in Kreuzwertheim im Franconia. In 1741, with her mother, she united with the congregation at Herrnhag. She married Andreas Kremser in 1742, and came with him to Pennsylvania, with the "Second Sea Congregation." He was the Vorsteher at Frederick School, Nazareth and Friedensthal, where he died October 9, 1769. She died of dropsy, July 11, 1798.

²² Jane Prosky, born in London, 1720. She married George Prosky, a German member of the London congregation. They labored in Yorkshire, in 1743, and at Holbeck, near Leeds, in 1744, and in the Jamaica, W. I., mission. Here her husband died in 1763. She came to Bethlehem, and died there March 24, 1771.

²³ Barbara Elizabeth Hertzer, m. n. Linck, born December 26, 1697, in Württemberg, came with her husband from Herrnhut with the "Second Sea Congregation." They labored in the schools and rural congregations. He died at Quitopeshille in May of 1749, and was buried at Hebron, (Lebanon). She died at Bethlehem, October 16, 1776.

²⁴ Magdalena Elizabeth Reiss, born 1701, in Heilbronn, Württemberg. With her husband, she united with the Moravians, and moved to Herrnhag, where he died in 1743. She came to Pennsylvania in 1749, and died October 24, 1769—the first to die in the Widows' House.

²⁵ Elizabeth Keller, a member of the congregation at Heidelberg, to which she subsequently returned.

Mary Ann Jorde²⁶, Mary Hirt²⁷, Barbara Fenstermacher²⁸, Mary Catharine Schnall²⁹, and Ann Liebisch³⁰.

At 2 o'clock the trombonists, from the belfry, summoned the congregation to assemble in the upper floor of the building, intended for the dormitory, where the commemorative Love-feast was to be held. The Helpers' Conference were present by special invitation. The hymn:

"Eure Ankunft segne Gott,
Euren Einzug gleichermassen,"

²⁶ Mary Ann Jorde, m. n. Horne, born 1718 at Lochenbach, Anspach, came to Pennsylvania with her husband, John Jorde, with the "Second Sea Congregation," and settled at Nazareth. He died at Bethlehem in April of 1760, and she in March of 1782. For many years she was employed at the Sun Tavern.

²⁷ Mary Hirt, m. n. Beroth, born August 7, 1732, at Oppa in the Palatinate, of Reformed parents, descended from the Huguenots. She came to Pennsylvania in 1738, and settled on Creuz Creek, near York, Pa. She came to Bethlehem in 1751, and was married April 17, 1757, to Martin Hirt. He united with the congregation at Gnadenhütten in 1749, and after his marriage removed to Nazareth. His widow married Herman Loesch, (as his third wife) in 1779, who was miller at Bethlehem from May 1781 to his death in 1791. She died September 15, 1813. Twice, as the widow Hirt and as the widow Loesch, she was an inmate of the Widows' House.

²⁸ Barbara Fenstermacher, was a native of Rhenish Bavaria, and was born March 28, 1709. Her first husband was Michael Leibert, a Roman Catholic, who died in Philadelphia in September of 1742, and was buried in St. Joseph's ground. She united with the Moravian Church in 1743. In May of 1749, she married Christian Fenstermacher, also one of the first members of the congregation in Philadelphia. In 1764 they removed to Lititz, where he became storekeeper, dying in 1768. After suffering for six years with paralysis, she died in December of 1790.

²⁹ Mary Catharine Schnall, m. n. Gemehle, was born September 22, 1722, in Wetteravia. She lost her mother in 1728, and came to Pennsylvania with her father, who settled in Frederick township. He was a Tunker, and she for some time was placed in the convent at Ephrata. Uniting with the Moravians, in 1742, she came to Bethlehem, and in 1747 was married to Thomas Schnall. He died in April of 1763, and she May 5, 1807. Her son John was a missionary among the Indians.

³⁰ Ann Liebisch was born at Zauchtenthal, Moravia, in 1703, where she and her husband Martin Liebisch were spiritually awakened by the preaching of Christian David. They were persecuted by the Papists, deserted their two farms and fled to Herrnhut. They came to Pennsylvania in 1742. He died at Christian's Spring in February of 1766. From internal injuries sustained by falling down stairs in the Widows' House, she died in January of 1770.

was sung, after which with grateful hearts the Lord was thanked for His gracious care, and the active interest of the Church, by which the building had been erected, was acknowledged. Reference was also made to the changes in the Choir during the past thirteen years. At the close of the address, a Liturgy, composed for the occasion, was sung.

When the guests had retired, the whole Choir repaired to their chapel, where Bro. Seidel delivered a dedicatory address on the text for the day: "It shall be to Me a name of joy, a praise and an honor, before all the nations of the earth, which shall hear all the good I do unto them."—Jer. 33, 9. He next introduced Sister von Gammern as the Deaconess of the Choir in place of Sister Huber, who was to remain at Nazareth. Then all knelt in prayer and Bro. Seidel implored the Lord to fill the chapel with His gracious presence whenever the Choir should assemble therein; that everything be done to His honor and glory, and His blessing rest upon it always. "The peace of God pervaded all the services of the happy day, in a most forcible manner."

The number of widows who were accommodated in the new house was eleven, viz., Sisters Bonn, Reiss, Hertzler, Hauser, Liebisch, Schnall, Leighton, Prosky, Kremser, Schropp and Tanneberger, and this number varied but little for the first five years after its occupation. They were dieted at the rate of 2s. 6d. each, per week!

The reputation of Bethlehem for its massive church buildings and finely cultivated farms, was well known throughout the Provinces, and attracted many visitors to the town. The first person of distinction to visit the Widows' House after its occupation, was Governor Penn who, after he had been escorted through the house, was taken to the Brethren's House, where he

was entertained on the "Altan" with cake, wine and music. In September of 1772, General Gage and Richard Penn were among the visitors, and in April of 1774, Baron Repsdorf, Governor of Santa Cruz. During the war of Independence the town was seldom without the presence of officers of the army or representatives of the civil government, the more distinguished of whom were allowed to inspect the Choir Houses on application. Some of those of record who visited the Widows' House are: In January of 1777, John Adams, Lovell and Hall, delegates to Congress, *en route* to Baltimore; in April, General Gates, the French Brigadier General de Fermoy, several American officers, and two Waldecker, one English and one Scotch officer, prisoners of war on parole; in May, Generals Schuyler and Joseph Reed; in August, Generals Greene and Knox; in September, Lafayette, Baron de Kalb, Captain Webb, (the founder of Methodism in America), and his wife Grace Webb, John Hancock, Samuel Adams, Richard Henry Lee and Henry Laurens. It was on the order of the latter, that the Widows' House was exempted for hospital purposes.

In November of 1778, the French Minister, Mons. Gerard, spent three days in the town and inspected all the Choir Houses; at a later date he made a second visit. During the year 1779, the most distinguished visitor was the wife of General Washington. On June 15, she arrived from Easton with Generals Sullivan, Poor, Maxwell and other officers, who, escorted by the Brethren Ettwein and von Marschall, visited the Widows' House and other buildings. The following day she left for Mount Vernon. In January of 1781, the French Marquis de Laval and Count de Custine, and in April, Count de St. Marine and Captain de St. Victor were visitors.

A memorable day in the history of the Widows' House, was the visit of General Washington on the

afternoon of July 25, 1782, while *en route* to Newburg, New York. He called with Brother Ettwein, was introduced to Sister Werwing, the Deaconess, inspected the Chapel, and was served with cake and wine. In May of 1791, his friend Alexander Hamilton was also an interested visitor.

By the General Synod of 1782, Bishop John von Watteville, was deputed to hold a visitation in the American Province, a measure urgently called for to restore order and unity of action in the affairs of the Church, which had been materially deranged during the Revolution. He set sail the end of September, 1783, but, meeting with adverse winds and finally with shipwreck, he did not arrive at Philadelphia before the end of May, 1784, and at Bethlehem the ensuing month. One of the important changes made during his visitation, was the re-opening of the boarding-school for girls at Bethlehem. The meals for this school were furnished from the Widows' House kitchen until 1809. It is also on record, that the Bishop and his wife (who had accompanied him to America), were frequent visitors to the Widows' House and kept many of the services of the Choir.

After an occupation of twenty-six years, the need of increased accommodations for the Choir compelled the erection of an addition, 20x44 feet, on the east end of the building, which was commenced in May of 1794, and finished in April of 1795. The workmen engaged were largely from the congregation at Gnadenhütten-on-the-Mahoning. The principal change made by the improvement was the transfer of the chapel to the extension, where the Choir continued to worship for nearly half a century.

On the twenty-sixth day of November in the year 1873 an Agreement was made between "The Board of Elders of the Northern Diocese of the Church of the United

Brethren in the United States of America" of the first part and John Jordan junior, of the City of Philadelphia, of the second part, in which Agreement, after setting forth in due form the history of the building and a brief of title, it is further declared that

"Whereas, The said John Jordan junior, party of "the second part hereto, has paid unto the said 'The Board of Elders of the Northern Diocese of the Church of the United Brethren in the United States of America,' the sum of Ten Thousand dollars, for the purpose of maintaining and continuing the said Widows' House at Bethlehem; the receipt of which sum the said Board of Elders do hereby acknowledge; as on the First day of December A. D. 1871:

"Now, therefore, it is understood and agreed by and between the Parties hereto, their respective legal representatives, successors and heirs, as follows, to wit:

"I. The legal title to the said Moravian Widows' House at Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, now is, and shall henceforth continue to be, vested in 'The Board of Elders of the Northern Diocese of the Church of the United Brethren in the United States of America,' as the executive head of the Northern Province of said Church: But in case a change shall, at any time hereafter, be made in the form of government of said Church, then the title to said Widows' House shall be vested in the individual or corporation who shall, for the time being, be the executive head of said Church.

"II. The said 'The Board of Elders of the Northern Diocese of the Church of the United Brethren in the United States of America,' and their successors in authority as above provided, shall have the sole and exclusive power of appointment and removal of all inmates of the said Widows' House at Bethlehem; their decision in all cases being final.

"III. In the selection of inmates, who shall be entitled to live free of rent, preference must be given to persons

“who, being members of the Church, are widows or
 “daughters of its deceased ministers or missionaries, or
 “of such persons as may have been employed by the
 “authorities of the Church in one or other department of
 “its service; and among these, priority shall be given to
 “persons whose means do not allow of their residing
 “elsewhere. In the event of any inmate ceasing to be a
 “member of the Moravian Church, then the said Board
 “of Elders shall forthwith direct the removal of such in-
 “mate, and her privilege in the institution shall thereupon
 “cease.

“IV. While it is desirable that ample accommodation
 “in the house shall be provided for each inmate, yet the
 “intention of the parties to this Agreement is to secure
 “the enjoyment of its benefits to the largest number of
 “persons; and therefore, appointments and changes, with
 “the consequent re-distribution of rooms, shall be made
 “from time to time in such manner as to accommodate as
 “many inmates as may be consistent with their health
 “and comfort.

“V. The Board of Elders of the Northern Diocese of
 “the Church of the United Brethren in the United States
 “of America, shall make such Rules and Regulations for
 “the maintenance and government of the Widows’ House
 “as are not at variance with this Agreement.”

In the year 1889 was completed a commodious annex, outwardly in architectural harmony with the original building and of nearly the same dimensions, but, in its internal arrangements and conveniences, in keeping with modern days. Its erection was due to the final consummation of a plan projected by the late John Jordan Jr., whose characteristic benefactions have left their impress on more than one institution of the Church. This annex, of two stories and a basement, the dimensions being 40x80 feet, is connected with the center of the original building by a two-story enclosed gallery, 11 1/3x20 feet. On the south end there is a three-story porch,

which commands a beautiful view of the valleys of the Lehigh and the Manocacy and the mountain beyond. It is built of selected mountain quarry stone, neatly pointed in black cement, with bricks for arches, cornices and belt courses laid in red mortar. Eight suites of rooms, four on each floor, divided by large corridors extending the whole length of the building, afford accommodation for as many inmates. Each suite consists of a sitting-room, a bed-chamber and a kitchen, the latter being furnished with a neat pressed-brick fire-place and cupboards. The bedrooms are supplied with wall closets. On each floor there are two bath-rooms with modern conveniences. An open stairway of oak, leads from the basement to the garret and is located in the center of the building.

The corridors are heated by a furnace, and hot water for the bath-rooms is supplied by a boiler and heating apparatus in the basement. The basement is divided into coal and fuel bins, a furnace room, and large provision cellar, with cemented floors. One-half of the garret, which extends over the whole building and its connections, is divided into store-rooms, one for each suite of rooms. The inside walls and ceilings are finished in plaster of Paris; the wood-work is painted a very light drab color, and the whole interior, being remarkably well lighted, presents a very bright and cheerful appearance.

What more appropriate text could have been selected to commemorate the opening of the new, than that appointed for the dedication of the old building in 1768?